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REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 28, 2006. Claims 1 to 5 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 5, both of which have been amended, are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1 to 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,416,190 (Grier). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns handling a minute object by using optical tweezers. Accordingly to one feature of the invention, a second base (or substrate), which holds a liquid including the minute object, has a guide pattern formed thereon. By virtue of this feature, in which the second base (or substrate) has a guide pattern formed thereon, handling of the minute object is facilitated.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 as amended is directed to an apparatus for handling a minute object by using optical tweezers. The apparatus includes a light source, and a first base to form a hologram with light emitted from the light source. The apparatus also includes a second base having a guide pattern formed thereon, wherein the second base holds a liquid including the minute object. The hologram is formed in the liquid on the second base and is used as the optical tweezers to handle the minute object in the liquid.

Independent Claim 5 as amended is directed to a method for handling a minute object by using optical tweezers. The method includes the steps of holding a liquid including the minute object on a substrate which has a guide pattern formed thereon, and

forming a hologram in the liquid including the minute object with light emitted from a light source. The method also includes the steps of forming the optical tweezers by using the hologram formed in the liquid including the minute object, and handling the minute object by using the optical tweezers.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of the subject application. In particular, Grier is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature that a second base (or substrate), which holds a liquid including the minute object, has a guide pattern formed thereon.

As understood by Applicant, Grier discloses that in an optical tweezer system 10, optical gradient forces arise from use of a single beam of light 12 to controllably manipulate a small dielectric particle 14 dispersed in a medium 16, whose index of refraction, n_m , is smaller than that of the particle 14. See Grier, Figure 1; and column 3, lines 42 to 47.

Although Grier may be seen to disclose that a small dielectric particle 14 is dispersed in a medium 16, nothing in Grier is seen to disclose or suggest forming a guide pattern on a second base (or substrate). Accordingly, Grier could not be seen to disclose or suggest that a second base (or substrate), which holds a liquid including the minute object, has a guide pattern formed theron, nor could it suggest the attendant benefits provided by such a second base (or substrate).

Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1 and 5 as amended are believed to be allowable over the applied reference.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least the same

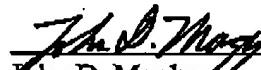
reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Regarding a formal matter, it is respectfully requested to receive an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 that was submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement dated August 10, 2006.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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